

A QUEEN'S CONFESSION.

I'm failing, wasting, dying, Without plaint or moan, Life's enchantments all around me, And the world my own.

Throned aloft in regal splendors, Should not life be sweet? With a crown upon my forehead, A kingdom at my feet.

Every day, adoring suppliants In my presence bend; Every day, fresh throngs of suitors For my grace contend.

"Wondrous fair," they call me, "fairest;" "Envy of all eyes!" I am sick at heart at listening To their flatteries.

What avail the pomp and lustre Of my grand estate, When my woman's heart amidst it Dwelleth desolate?

All men's love to me is worthless, Save the love of one! Who could see the stars with vision Dazzled by the sun?

Night and day his image haunts me; While I sleep or wake; Little dreams he the anguish Suffered for his sake.

From his sighs no borrowed glory Blending with his own, All unrivalled 'mid the famous He stands first—alone!

His greatness of a spirit Gentle, firm, and free; Grace and goodness are his titles, Manhood his degree.

Were I but the lowliest maiden, Loveliest in my land, But to do him daily service— Stoop to kiss his hand!

Sundered are we; by the false world, Far as East from West; Woman's heart, what dost thou, beating In a royal breast?

And so far I seem above him, While so low I lie, In the dust—the merest object— Mock'd with majesty.

Oh, the cruel weight of glory, Crushing out my life; The fair semblance glowing over The fierce inward strife!

Scarcely the first peal shall have sounded Of his bridal bell, Than his merry tones shall mingle With my funeral knell.

Woman's life is love. A woman, If of love denied, Found a kingdom all too narrow For my heart—and died!

"THE LEG BUSINESS."

From the Galaxy for August.

I hasten to assure the reader who pines over the title of this paper curiously, that it does not relate to anybody's patent appliances for providing artificial legs for poor soldiers and sailors who have accidentally lost those limbs. It relates to a phase of the dramatic art. The "leg business," as known to managers, players, and dramatists, is the same thing that is known to the outer world as the "naked drama."

Two classes of "female" performers are associated with the naked drama, so called. The first are a legitimate branch of the theatrical profession, and in their way are as truly artists as are musicians or actors who use their intellects. They are the ballet dancers. The theatre as legitimately deals in music and dancing as it does in tragedy or comedy. Hence, the ballet is and always has been as freely recognized by the most cultured peoples (when they approve of the theatre at all) as any other feature of the mimic world. For the dancer of the legitimate ballet—who knows them as a class well—have a thorough respect.

They are a hard-working, ill-paid body of women, not unfrequently the sole support of entire families, and their moral characters are not one whit affected by their line of business. The admiring public who sees the pretty picture they make on the stage, little knows the physical fatigue which these poor girls encounter in return for a few dollars a week salary from the manager, and an illiberal judgment at the hands of the audience. Few men work so hard as the ballet-girl—the corset, who, by half-past eight in the morning, is at the theatre, clad in gauze and silk webbing, practising pirouettes, entrechats, the toe torture, and other inquisitorial exercises. I have seen these girls practise from nine o'clock in the morning until half-past twelve, almost without cessation, then take a hurried lunch, sometimes eating it while standing shivering in their thin clothing in a draughty space behind the "flats," only to begin their labor again at half-past one, and so continue till five. This is for the matinee performance; at half-past seven that of the night commences, finishing, perhaps, at eleven. Then come undressing, stage paraphernalia, and laying away their tidy (and tidiness is the rule with them—the exceptions rare), these girls must, for economy's sake, be careful of their clothing. And so, long after midnight, the tired creatures, often laden with heavy bundles, creep listlessly into street cars, to be stared at by rude men, or still worse, drag home through the deserted streets, alone and unprotected, at the risk of being mistaken for traviates of the lowest grade.

With the dancer who has passed the chrysalis ballet-girl stage, and is now a full-fledged, butterfly promiscuity, with her name large-lettered in the bills, and her engagement-papers stamped and signed at the lawyer's, the road is not so stony. There are still briars in her path, undoubtedly; prim respectability shrinks from her contact, and the thorns of Puritanism openly lacerate her tender flesh.

I am far from placing the ballet-girl in the same rank with an intellectual player; but there are grades of quality in all fields. She is a dancer, and loves dancing as an art. That pose into which she now throws herself with such abandon is not a vile pandering to the taste of those giggling men in the orchestra-stalls, but is an effort which, to her idea, is as loving a tribute to a beloved art as a painter's dearest woman burst into tears on leaving the stage because they had observed men laughing among themselves, rolling their eyes about, and evidently making unworthy comments on the pretty creature before them, whose whole soul, and whose whole body, too, was for the hour lovingly given over to Terpsichore. "It is they who are bad," said Mademoiselle B. to me the other night; "it is not we." Those men who have impure thoughts are the persons on whom censure should fall—not upon the devotees of an art

which the dancers love and embody to the best of their ability, and without any more idea of impurity because of the dress, which is both the conventional and the only practicable one, than sculptors or painters have when they use the female figure as a medium to convey their ideas of poetry to the outside world.

But there is one set of exponents of the "naked drama" on whom I am willing to join with the general public in launching every possible invective of censure and reproach. I mean those women who are "neither fish, flesh, nor fowl," of the theatrical creature, who are neither actresses, dancers, pantomimists, nor ballet-girls, but who enjoy a celebrity more widely spread than any of these—all legitimate artists in their way—could hope to attain. It is unpleasant to mention names; it is disagreeable and even dangerous to do so; but when such women as Cora Pearl, Vestral, Menken, Kate Fisher, and their like, are insolent enough to invade the stage, and involve in the obloquy which falls on them hundreds of pure and good women, it is time for even the most tolerant critic to express disapprobation. Whatever the private character of these women may be—however good, however bad—we are justified from their public exhibitions in denouncing them as shameless and unworthy. It is true, they make more money than any other class of "performers;" more money than the poetic Edwin Booth; infinitely more than the intellectual E. L. Davenport. Stifle conscience, honor, and decency, and mere money-making is easy work. These women are not devotees of any art. With the exception of Vestral—a failure on every lyric stage, both in Europe and America—they do not act, dance, sing, or mime; but they have not, as they themselves in a way which is attractive to an indolent taste, and their inefficiency in other regards is overlooked. With the public lies the power to correct this evil.

And yet some of these women, even those of the class I have just mentioned, have aspirations for higher things. The last play which I prepared for the stage had for its heroine a woman of tender feelings, holy passions, such as every other loves to paint. After its production I had many applicants for the purchase of copies, as it was not known that the actress who originally played the piece had obtained the exclusive right to its production. Among the applicants was a person whose name is thoroughly associated with the Mazeppa, Dick Turpin, Jack Sheppard school, and none other. I was astonished that such a woman should care for such a part. What sympathy had the French Spy with a heroine tender, chafing, and self-denying? What was the ennobling influence of anguish and repentance to Jack Sheppard and his jolly pals who "fake away" so ostentatiously in the burden of the chorus and the pockets of the unwary? I could not help expressing my astonishment at this seeming inconsistency to a person who was acquainted with my applicant, for I was not. "Well, you see," replied he, referring to her familiarly by her pet name, "I go into the leg business as much as anybody, but bless you, no money else pays nowadays; so what can she do?"

The "leg business" is a business which requires legs. That these should be naturally symmetrical is desirable, but not indispensable, for the art of padding has reached such perfection that nature has almost been distanced, and stands, blushing at her own incompleteness, in the background. New York can boast some artistic "paddingers," and if you are curious to know where they live, what their prices are, etc., you can go to any green-room and find their business cards stuck about in the frames of the looking-glasses, in the joints of the gas burners, and sometimes lying on the top of the sacred cast-case itself. Strange to say, however, that Holy of Holies, the city of Philadelphia, bears off the palm in the pad-making art. Thus the New Jersey railways are frequently enriched by the precious freight of pentennial Mazeppas, going on pilgrimages to the padding Mecca. It is generally supposed that padding is only employed in the enlarging and beautifying of the calf of the leg, but this is a mistake. Such little intricacies as knee-cases and low-legs, trifling errors in nature's original design, we lift our hands in blank astonishment that any creature with audacity enough to assume such a position, can have so little ability to lift it.

The money the Mazeppas make is something quite astonishing. Ten thousand dollars "share" for a month's engagement was paid, but a short time ago, to one of the most attractive of the "French Spies." In less than two months after, she was obliged to borrow money to pay her hotel bill. "Easy come, easy go," is a proverb which must have been made for these women. It is not strange, perhaps, that they should have yielded in the potency of King Lear, and offer him with little delicacy to gain that always desired end—flattering comments in the newspapers. I have an editorial friend, of an extremely conscientious turn of mind, who was coolly asked by a Mazeppa if he would not take up the cudgels of criticism for her, as against another local paper, at the same time drawing from her pocket an immense roll of bills, and asking him to "take what he wanted." He complied with her request; for he wanted nothing that savored of bribery, and he took "what he wanted."

There are those who understand rather better the details of art of administering the criticism. One such, on coming to New York for the first time, hearing that to mollify Muggins was indispensable to her success, sat down, after much deliberation, and mailed him a black letter, or blackmailed him a white letter, including a fifty dollar bill, and a transparent cloak for bribery in the shape of a request that he would send her one stanza of a song of his own brilliant composition (he having never written a line of verse in his life), leaving the subject, air, metre, and sentiment open to his discriminating judgment. The fifty dollar bill was never heard of more, but the four lines of tender thought which followed, were sent to her address.

How's that?

"Come, love, come, where the roses blow, And the nightingale their radiant hair, Where the zephyrs sigh to the far-off zones, And the sleeping seas swell on the air."

If the stage could be rid of the Mazeppa scourge, there is no reason why it should not

form as good a channel for gifted and intelligent young women to gain a livelihood by honest exertion as any other. Openings for women are few enough, as governesses, and schoolmistresses, and shirtmakers, and hoop-skirt druggists will testify. But worse slavery than any of these, or even than that of the factory-girl in the Lowell mills, is the thralldom of waiting to be married to have one's board and lodging paid. A woman should have her destiny in her own hands as completely as a man has his, and the first boon that should be vouchsafed her is the happy knowledge that, before she lies down at night, she may really thank her Maker, and not her husband, for having given her this day her daily bread. The stage, even in its poorest-paid departments, will permit this; and therefore I cannot feel that I am wrong in advocating its adoption by honest-minded, well-behaved, and intelligent young women.

The drama, for good or bad, is an immense power. I agree with Barry Cornwall when he says there is nothing in light literature so powerful, and that there is a greater scope for excellence in this than in any other branch of literature. "For it ought to embody the genius of oratory with the poetic spirit; the soaring of the lyric with epic majesty; the sentiment of romance; the music of song; the strength and indignation of satire; with the moral that should belong to all."

It is for the people to determine whether this shall be. If they will but give their support to this species of dramatic entertainment, there is little doubt that earnest efforts to furnish such will be made. But the majority will always triumph. An American manager could scarcely be an American, if with him the god-like voice were not that of the muse. It shall be as Mr. Mass says. Either ballet, or heroic verse; the "leg business" or the brain business; and the paid money will indicate the made choice. Do not expect mere self-denying virtue from Boxletier of the theatre than from Stoxjobber of Wall street. Both want money, and both will "make" it. I am far from being the apologist of the manager, be it understood. The same apology can be made for the Mazeppas themselves. The whole thing is in the last degree disreputable, but the only remedy lies in making the tide of public opinion set against it—as I believe it ultimately will.

OLIVE LOGAN.

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Table with 2 columns: Description of assets and Amount. Includes United States 5 Per Cent Bond, 114,000.00; 10 Per Cent Bond, 100,000.00; 5 Per Cent Bond, 50,000.00; City of Philadelphia 5 Per Cent Bond, 25,000.00; 4 Per Cent Bond, 20,000.00; 3 Per Cent Bond, 15,000.00; 2 Per Cent Bond, 10,000.00; 1 Per Cent Bond, 5,000.00; Cash on hand, 10,000.00; Total, 349,000.00.

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